Africa Weitbrecht, H. U. 64

Kikuyu Tracts

CO-OPERATION AT THE HOME BASE

By the

Rev. H. U. Weitbrecht, Ph.D., D.D.

Longmans, Green and Co.
39 Paternoster Row, London
New York, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras
1914

Price One Penny Net

EDITORS' NOTE

THE object of this series is to throw light upon problems felt for some time past in the mission field, and lately brought to public notice by the Kikuyu Conference. For the missionaries and the young Native Churches, face to face with the great forces of heathenism and Islam, questions of co-operation of necessity arise as practical politics demanding careful consideration and wise handling. The writers do not attempt to discuss the immediate points at issue, but rather aim at giving help towards clear thinking on the larger questions which lie behind. Each author is entirely responsible for his own pamphlet and for that alone.

Co-operation at the Home Base

"It is, I hope and believe, being recognised with increasing clearness among us, that we stand at one of the great turning points of the world's history. I very much doubt myself whether in the whole of that history anything can be found quite comparable to that awakening of these immense masses—comprising, roughly speaking, just about half of the entire human race—which is going on at the present time, while to appreciate its full significance, one has to bear in mind also the singularly high gifts and qualifications with which these various races—Chinese, Japanese, Coreans, and Indians—are endowed, and the great value of the contributions which they will consequently bring to that larger life into which they are thus entering. . . .

"And for the fulfilment of purposes like this it is to the Church that God looks primarily as His agent. Just as we individually are fellow-workers with Him, so is the Church as a whole His chosen agent. He is not indeed bound, and the workings of the Holy Spirit often manifest themselves in unexpected ways outside all calculations of ours; but none the less, guided alike by Holy Scripture and by the course of history, we cannot doubt that this is in the main His method, and when we remember that even to the 'principalities and powers in the heavenly places' it is 'through the Church' that His manifold wisdom is revealed, we can understand the better how here also on earth it must be so.

"And when this is recognised, how tremendous

becomes the responsibility imposed upon the Church that she should be at such a time in the highest possible state of efficiency, and thus able to respond to so magnificent an opportunity and to answer the purposes of Him Who has deigned to make her His fellow-worker. At such a time how peculiarly grievous must anything that is amiss in her life appear, as we realise how inevitably it limits her power of response and fetters her in that fellow-working." [1]

The Kikuyu Conference has pointedly (though not for the first time) called our attention to the fact that—next to the poverty of spiritual life and power—the disunited condition of the Church is the most grievous of all obstacles to the progress of the Kingdom of God. What can we do to remedy this disunion?

The Lambeth Conference of 1908 advised that members of our Communion "should take pains to study the doctrine and position of those who are separated from it," and so "to promote a cordial mutual understanding." It further recommended that "every opportunity should be welcomed of co-operation between members of different Communions in all matters pertaining to the social and moral welfare of the people." Meanwhile the common work of the Mission Field has been teaching us that we not only may, but must co-operate in matters of common faith and practice, if we are not to neglect the call of a world opened up to Christendom by God, and of adolescent Churches growing up in every direction. Moreover, this co-operation will have to be not only accidental and occasional, but systematic and regular. Far more than all study it will lead us to a better understanding, for in such common service we get a living knowledge of our brother as he really is and feels, outside the often murky atmosphere of tradition or habit. As the Bishop of Calcutta again says: "At the present time I am perfectly convinced that that which has

[1] From an address delivered to the clergy of the Diocese of Rangoon, January 16, 1914, by the Metropolitan in India and Ceylon.

kept us apart has not been really vital differences of principle, but inherited antipathy and social aloofness, not meeting each other sufficiently in a friendly, brotherly way, which leads to mutual understanding and creates an atmosphere in which it is possible to draw far nearer to each other than has been the case in the past."

In the Mission Field the comity which respects a neighbour's territory and helps him at points of contact, as well as co-operation in the preaching of the Gospel and the building up of the Church, are no new things; but within the last decade they have been greatly on the increase. At the Home Base, more especially in our own country, this common action is attended with greater difficulties owing to historical associations and hereditary prejudices. Nevertheless it has a history in the past and is on the increase in the present.

From the first this co-operation at the Home Base was called forth by the needs of the Mission Field, as when in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge sent Lutheran missionaries to South India. At the turn of the centuries—that great seedtime of modern missionary societies—in 1795 was founded "The Missionary Society," by joint action of Anglicans and non-Anglicans; though when the Church Missionary Society was founded in 1799, the other became the London Missionary Society, and has since then been practically the organ of the Congregationalists. But the Religious Tract Society (1799) and the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804) have from the first been joint undertakings both for home and foreign work. Later on various other missionary societies have been founded on the same basis, being financed and administered by members of various reformed Churches. The most important (though not the only ones) are the China Inland Mission and the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission. Various joint missionary conferences (espe-

cially those held in London, 1888, and Liverpool, 1896), materially helped to unify the work of the Societies and the Churches represented by them, and then reports already formed a considerable literature before 1910.

In the case of some of these efforts and organisations the basis of united work has been defined as undenominational. By this is understood that the content of the Christianity which they agree to propagate is the irreducible residuum that is left after elimination of the points on which the denominations differ. It would be wrong to deny that a good deal of useful work has been done on this basis, especially in philanthropic undertakings, where differences in doctrine and discipline are little in evidence. But in missionary work, which has to do with the discipline of the Christian life for the individual, and with the building up of the Church as a body, the undenominational principle has serious defects. The special character of each denomination stands in the main, not for an untruth or a caprice, but for a truth and a manifestation of life. Simply to drop out these elements, because of the difficulty of adjustment, is to produce a thin and unsatisfying form of Christianity; and one which does not meet the needs of life and growth. Within the last twenty years the principle has been increasingly recognised which was voiced by the Lambeth Conference of 1908: "We must set before us the Church of Christ as He would have it, all spirit and all body, enriched with all those elements of divine truth which the separated communities of Christians now emphasise severally, strengthened by the interaction of all the gifts and graces which our divisions now hold asunder, filled with all the fulness of God. . . . We must constantly desire not compromise but comprehension, not uniformity but unity." In other words, the basis of co-operation has become recognised as interdenominational. This does justice to both sides of the problem. The common action

is based on the belief and discipline which we actually share with other bodies ; yet it is recognised that each Church is not merely permitted but bound to teach and practice on the special lines which it has historically received, while endeavouring sympathetically to understand the standpoint of others and to find the adjustment which will bring the gifts of both into the service of a higher unity.

It is this standpoint which was represented on the largest scale by the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910. Never before had there been a gathering representing so fully the different elements in our own Church together with those of the non-Anglican communions. Those who want to realise this should read *Edinburgh, 1910,* by W. H. P. Gairdner (Oliphant). In the debates on the promotion of unity the most opposite views were stated with the utmost frankness. In the preparatory report of the Commission it found that these conflicting conceptions " reduced themselves to two main types : to that of those who see in the transcending significance of the faith common to all the fundamental and determining fact in the situation, and who therefore incline towards the formation of some sort of federation of Christian communions and the practising of free intercommunion ; and the conception of those who believe that this common measure of faith is wholly imperfect, because it fails to include essential parts of divine revelation or essential means of grace, and that to surrender these, or to do anything from which that surrender could be inferred, would be a culpable neglect of trust. All the denominations, according to this view, are emphasising some fragment of vital truth, and the full, rich, final unity, which is all that is worth aiming for, must include all these fragments." Therefore, " Unity, when it comes, must be something richer, grander, more comprehensive than anything which we can see at present. It is something into which and up to which we must grow, something of which

and for which we must become worthy. We need to have sufficient faith in God to believe that He can bring us to something more Christlike than anything to which at present we see a way." But notwithstanding this, or rather because of the clear recognition of the different forms into which the one underlying life branches out, co-operation is possible and right. This is most characteristically illustrated by a letter which the Bishop of Cremona, a prelate of the Roman Church, addressed to the Conference. In it he says: "The elements of fact in which you all agree are numerous and are common to the various Christian denominations, and they can therefore serve as a point of departure for your discussions. It is, therefore, legitimate to aspire to a unity of faith and of religious practice, and to work for its realisation by the consecration of all energies of mind and heart. This is a work in which we in our day may well co-operate."

The outcome of these debates was the Edinburgh Continuation Committee. This body consists of thirty-five members—ten from the British Isles, ten from the Continent of Europe, ten from North America, and five from Asia, Africa, and Australia. Its work is to keep the whole missionary world in touch, to help in co-ordinating the work of the Societies and Churches, to collect information and carry on investigations which require interdenominational and international action, thus rendering it possible to frame and carry out missionary policy on a large scale, and to furnish an organ for common action where it may be requisite and possible. In 1911 representatives of Missionary Societies of all denominations set on foot a Board of Study for the Preparation of Missionaries in Britain, which works in close touch with the Continuation Committee. Both bodies are maintained on a basis of co-operative finance, instituted by the Annual Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. This body is the third

co-operative organisation which has sprung from the Edinburgh Conference. Its work, as compared with the international operations of the Continuation Committee, represents the common policy and efforts of British Missionary Societies of all Churches. Its most important duty has been to organise the co-operative system of finance already mentioned. It has also brought into existence a Missionary Press Bureau, which is doing invaluable work for all missions in the journalistic world. The Board of Study carries on various activities, which are making themselves felt in the more efficient preparation of missionaries for their work. Its month's Vacation Course during August, held at Oxford and Cambridge alternately, has been attended by 100 students, including a contingent from continental countries. Many other courses have been held in colleges for men and women, and many individual students have been guided in their studies. The *Bibliography for Missionary Students,* published last year, has had a wide circulation and is felt to be an indispensable handbook.

The most outstanding work of the Continuation Committee has been the issue since January 1912 of the *International Review of Missions,* which straightway took its place in the front rank of missionary periodicals. The international treatment of missionary problems and policy, the thorough and many-sided investigations of facts and conditions, the full bibliography of missionary literature, and the masterly annual reviews of the missionary world give this quarterly a unique value, and show how the co-operation of men and women of all churches is enriching the spiritual life and vigour of the whole, and opening the way to a higher unity. In addition to this *Review* the Continuation Committee works through a number of Special Committees, appointed at its annual meeting, on the great aspects of the missionary enterprise which are common to all Churches. For instance, a Committee on Training Schools in the Field, links

the work of the Board of Study to its continuation when the missionary arrives in his new sphere. A Committee on Christian Education is developing a policy of co-ordination in missionary education all over the world. During the past year the Education Department in certain provinces of India put forward proposals which would have been highly detrimental to the progress of missionary education. Representations made to Government through this Education Committee brought about a satisfactory adjustment. A Committee on Work among Moslems is carrying on a thorough and careful investigation into the contemporary spread of Islam, which is a necessary basis for a strong, unified policy in that direction on the part of Christendom. There can be no doubt, moreover, that the realisation of the international character of Christian missionary effort has been a definite factor in promoting the movements towards international amity, which have happily increased in force of late.

Obedience to our Lord's command has thus led on men of many Churches and nations to work together in preparing the messenger and carrying the message to the nations. Such co-operation has already taught us much of the secret of unity, and it will teach us more as we go on. By walking together on the paths that make for unity, both at home and abroad, we shall, in God's good time, emerge on the great high road.

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
at Paul's Work, Edinburgh

The Kikuyu Conference. A Study in Christian Unity. By J. J. Willis, D.D., Bishop of Uganda. 8vo. Paper Covers, 6*d.*

The Church in Uganda. A Charge to Missionaries of the Uganda Mission, 1913. By J. J. Willis, D.D., Bishop of Uganda. 8vo. Paper covers, 6*d.* net.

KIKUYU TRACTS

The Confirmation Rubric: Whom Does it Bind?
By the Rev. H. M. Gwatkin, D.D.

"That they All may be One."
By the Bishop of Durham.

The Church in the Mission Field.
By Eugene Stock, D.C.L.

The Ministry and Unity.
By the Rev. F. S. Guy Warman, D.D.

Episcopacy (1) In Scripture.
By the Rev. H. M. Gwatkin, D.D.

Episcopacy (2) In the Church of England.
By the Rev. H. M. Gwatkin, D.D.

Comity in the Mission Field.
By the Rev. H. G. Grey, M.A.

Co-operation at the Home Base.
By the Rev. H. U. Weitbrecht, Ph.D., D.D.

The Limits of Ritual and Ceremonial in the Anglican Communion.
By P. V. Smith, LL.D.

What is our Deposit?
By the Rev. A. J. Tait, D.D.

What is the Church?
By the Right Rev. C. F. D'Arcy, D.D., Bishop of Down.

How it Happens.
By George Anthony King, M.A.

One Penny Net each.

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.
LONDON, NEW YORK, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS